DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 175 159 RA 012 080

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TITLE Education Price Index, Elementary-Secondary Level.
INSTITUTION Statistics Canada, Ottawa (Ontario). Education, Science, and Culture Div.
PUB DATE 17 Jun 79
NOTE 26p.: Paper presented at the International Congress on Education (2nd, Vancouver, British Columbia, June 17-20, 1979); Not available in paper copy due to light print of original document
LANGUAGE English; French

EDRS PRICE MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS *Cost Indexes; Elementary Secondary Education; Expenditures; Foreign Countries; *School District Spending; Teacher Salaries
IDENTIFIERS *Canada; *Education Price Index

ABSTRACT

This paper explains the education price index formulated in 1979 for Canada. It defines a price index as a statistical measure designed to show changes in the price of a commodity or a set of commodities with respect to time. The index calculated for the project covers salaries and wages, instructional supplies, school facilities, supplies and services, and fees and contractual services. The paper explains that the major purpose of the education price index is to enable the identification of the real level of resources going to public school systems after adjustment for inflation. Appended to the paper are a brief introduction to the index in both French and English together with preliminary data covering 1973 to 1978. (Author/JM)

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Education Price Index

Elementary-Secondary Level

Paper presented at

The Annual Meeting

of

Canadian School Trustees Association

On June 17, 1979

Presenting Author

Y. Dupuis.

EA 012 080

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Y. Dupuis

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

The purpose of this presentation is to formally announce to members of your association in particular and to the public in general that an Education Price Index is now available from Statistics Canada.

Why an Education Price Index? How has it been constructed? How can it be used? are all relevant questions we will try to answer over the next fifteen minutes.

A) WHY AN EDUCATION PRICE INDEX?

The best answer to this question is to refer to the recommendations of two major organizations. The first one is a proposal prepared for the Canadian School Trustees Association by Dr. Peter Atherton and Dr. Henry Armstrong on public school price indices[1]. In this document, dated November 1975, the problem is stated:

> "The total cost of Education, like the total cost of any service, is determined by price and quantity. If school boards and other agencies involved in the administration of public schools are to make rational, economic policy decisions, they must be in a position to identify changes in prices and changes in the quantities of the goods and services that form the inputs of the public school system. When the implications of the placement of wage and price controls on school budgetary systems are examined, the need for a public school price index becomes that much more urgent".

1 Atherton, Dr. Peter and Dr. Henry Armstrong, A Proposal for Public School Price Indexes, prepared for Canadian School Trustees Association, November 25, 1975

The second reference is to a recommendation of the examiners of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) when reviewing canadian education in 1975. This recommendation was made only a few months after the CSTA proposal was completed. It said:

> "Statistics Canada might wish to consider the construction of a more precise set of education-cost indicators, tailored not only to the major inputs purchased by educational institutions but also to each of the major levels of education. This would greatly improve the effort to keep track of changes over time in the level of real resources used, net of the effect of changes in prices"[2].

Considering that the education sector accounts for a substantial portion of public spending and also considering the high levels of inflation we have been experiencing, it seemed appropriate to develop an Education Price Index.

The next question: How has it been constructed?

B) HOW HAS IT BEEN CONSTRUCTED?

Before examining the methodology used to construct the elementary-secondary education price index, let us see what price indexing is. In general, price indexing is quite simple. According to definitions it is a statistical measure designed to show changes in the price of a commodity or a set of commodities with respect to time.

2 Canada, Reviews of National Policies for Education, Paris The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development. 1976, p. 105.

The best example of this is the Consumer Price Index (CPI). This particular index measures changes in retail prices of a basket of goods and services purchased by families. In other words, if families were to buy only butter and its price in 1978 compared to 1973 was $1.30 and $1.00 respectively, the price relative would be 1.30. This example, however, is not very realistic since families consume a large variety of goods and services.

To complicate our example, we could assume that, in addition to the butter, families buy cars. Again, if the price of a Chevrolet was $8,000 in 1978 compared to $5,000 in 1973, its price relative would then be 1.60.

In order to establish the price index for this limited set of commodities (butter and cars) additional information would be required. Since families in general spend more money on cars than on butter, a mathematical average of the two price relatives would not be very appropriate. What is actually required is the proportion of expenditures spent on each item.

Assuming that families spend 80% of their budgets on cars and 20% on butter, the index would be constructed as follows:

$$(1.30 \times 20\%) + (1.60 \times 80\%) = 1.54$$

meaning that the retail price of goods and services, namely butter and cars, consumed by families increased by 54% between 1973 and 1978.

This very brief retrospective on price indexing theory leads us to the identification of the basic requirements necessary to the construction of a price index. They are:

1) the selection of a representative basket of goods and services,
2) the identification of the weighting factors,

3) the selection of a base year,

4) the capability of observing the price movement of the goods and services selected,

5) the selection of an index formula.

The first three requirements were obtained from the school board financial statistics survey. This survey, expanded in 1973, provides since that time school board expenditures by function and by economic classification.

The basket of goods and services is comprised of 13 items which are grouped into four (4) major categories. These categories are Salaries and Wages, Instructional Supplies, School Facilities, Supplies and Services and Fees and Contractual Services. The weights correspond to the amount of dollars spent for each of the items included in the basket. The choice of 1973 as the base year was determined by the fact that we had available detailed data only from 1973.

Although the basket is the same in all provinces, the weighting factors differ from one province to the other on the basis of spending patterns.

With respect to the pricing sources, all the price data with the exception of teachers' salaries are supplied by Prices Division. They are either components of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) or the Industrial Selling Price Index (ISPI).

The major feature of the elementary-secondary education price index is without doubt the calculation of the price variation of the last item, teachers' salaries.

The first approach was to compute the price variation of this service using the average teachers' salary. This approach however, was rejected by Statistics Canada on the basis that such a price variation would also incorporate price change due to variation of teachers' qualifications and experience.

Because the objective was to measure price change due only to inflation, it was decided to build the teachers' salary index from each rate of salaries expressed in teachers' salary grids.

Following the same methodology as that used for the complete index, the teachers' salary sub-index compares each rate of salary in the grid during a given year with each corresponding rate in the base year. Then each of these price relatives is weighted according to the total teachers' salaries of each cell in a grid according to the base year, that is 1973.

An additional difficulty still had to be resolved. In some provinces teachers' salaries are negotiated at the provincial level, while in others they are negotiated at the school board level. In the latter, a teachers' salary index is produced at the board level and then each of the board indices is weighted according to the relative importance of total teachers' salaries of each board to produce a provincial teacher salary sub-index. This price variation of teachers' salaries is incorporated in the total index as we noted earlier, at the same level as the other price variations supplied by Prices Division.

Now that the requirements for a basket of goods and services, the weighting factors, the base year and the price change of all the items including teachers' salaries have been met, the last requirement will be examined - the index formula.

The two currently used formulae for price indexes are Laspeyres' formula and the Paashe formula.

The two formulae are almost identical. The difference is that Laspeyres' formula maintains the weighting base constant while the weighting base changes every year with the Paashe formula.

The Education Price Index uses the Laspeyres' formula. On the one hand, this formula is currently used in the construction of other price indices at Statistics Canada and on the other hand, a base-weighted index does not require new weighting factors every year, therefore, it is cheaper. It is recognized however that the Laspeyres' formula become progressively inadequate with time. This difficulty is solved by revising the weighting factors when they no longer represent the pattern of expenditures. In the case of the Education Price Index, tests revealed that weighting factors for 1973 are still relevant.

Now that the method of calculating the index has briefly been described, let us move to the last question. How can it be used?

C) HOW CAN IT BE USED?

Before looking at a few specific applications, let us recall that an education price index is an indicator that measures the price movement of a basket of goods and services purchased by school boards with respect to time. Since the objective was to produce a price index that would reflect price change due only to inflation and not due to change in quality or quantity, the main use of such a measure is for deflation purposes.

The indices readily available from Statistics Canada include an Education Price Index (EPI) as well as sub-indices. They are available at the provincial level from 1973 to 1978 inclusively.

Since a price index measures price changes and not the level of price, caution should be exercised in comparing provincial indices.

When compared with the C.P.I., the national education price index reveals that between 1973 and 1978 the prices of goods and services purchased by school boards increase by 70.1% as opposed to 55.5% for the consumer price index.

The C.P.I. has often been used as a substitute to deflate current dollars spent by school boards since no suitable index was available. Now that such a tool is available, it is interesting to observe the difference between the two deflated figures. When deflated by C.P.I., the total school board expenditures in Canada shows a 22.3% increase between 1973 and 1978 while the increase is only 11.8% when deflated by the E.P.I.

This observation suggests that, whenever the total school board expenditures were deflated by C.P.I. to identify the level of real resources going to public school systems, net of the effect of changes in prices, this level was likely to have been overestimated.

Although a sole measure such as the education price index will not solve all the problems faced by school administrators, it will become another tool available to the decision-maker and it will fulfil a specific need which your organization indicated four years ago.

Thank You.

Statistics Canada / Statistique Canada

Ottawa

Education Price Index
Elementary-Secondary Level

Introduction

Based on estimates, expenditures on Elementary-Secondary Education totalled 12 billion dollars in 1978-79. This represents an increase of 90% over 1973-74. Prior to the calculation of the elementary-secondary education price index, there was no adequate means of determining what portion of expenditure growth was caused by changing prices as opposed to the quantity of inputs purchased. The need for such a measure has frequently been documented, most recently by the Canadian School Trustees Association, and the OECD report on education in Canada, both in 1975.

Purpose

The primary objective was to construct a statistical measure that would permit expenditures on elementary-secondary education to be deflated. Using the statistical technique of deflation, pure price change is identified first, then change in the quantity of education can be established as a residual.

Indices des Prix
Enseignement Elémentaire-Secondaire

Introduction

Selon des estimations, les dépenses aux fins de l'enseignement élémentaire et secondaire totaliseront 12 milliards de dollars en 1978-79, soit une augmentation de 90% par rapport à 1973-74. Avant la production de l'indice des prix de l'enseignement élémentaire et secondaire, il n'y avait aucun moyen de distinguer la portion de la croissance des dépenses causée par les variations de prix de celle causée par la quantité des intrants achetés. Le besoin d'une telle mesure a été fréquemment mentionné, plus récemment en 1975, par l'Association canadienne des commissaires d'écoles et par le rapport de l'OCDE sur les politiques d'éducation au Canada.

But

L'objectif principal consistait à produire une mesure permettant le dégonflage des dépenses de l'enseignement élémentaire et secondaire. L'utilisation de cette technique statistique de dégonflage permet d'abord l'identification de la variation des prix pour ensuite établir les changements de quantités des intrants comme valeur résiduelle.

Process

Following more than a year of consultation with potential major users, a methodology was selected. Critical to the exercise was the identification of appropriate data which would permit the index to be produced - expenditures data to determine weights and appropriate measures of price change. Although price indexes for most expenditure categories were readily available, indexes for teachers'salaries had to be constructed from raw data.

Index Structure

The index is base-weighted i.e. the total price movement is a weighted average of individual components, where weights reflect the relative importance of expenditures in the base period, 1973. These data were obtained from a national survey of school board financial statistics.

Développement

Après plus d'une année de consultations avec les principaux utilisateurs éventuels, une méthodologie fut sélectionnée. La construction de l'indice dépendait d'une part de la disponibilité des données permettant une pondération adéquate et, d'autre part des renseignements sur les variations de prix. Le seul élément d'information indisponible était la variation de prix des salaires des enseignants. Ce dernier élément fut l'objet de calculs spécifiques.

Structure de l'indice

L'indice est pondéré sur la période de base, c'est-à-dire que l'ensemble du mouvement des prix est une moyenne pondérée des différentes composantes où les poids réflètent l'importance relative des dépenses à la période de base, soit 1973. Ces renseignements proviennent de l'enquête sur les statistiques financières des conseils scolaires.

Sources of Price Data

All of the non-salary price data is derived from components of price series already published by Statistics Canada particularly the Consumer Price Index and Industry Selling Price Indexes.

Teachers'salary sub-indexes were constructed from the movement of salary grids in successive years. For the purpose of this sub-index, the distribution of teachers by qualification and experience level is held constant at base year, so that the quantity and mix of teachers do not influence price movement from one year to the next.

The price data on caretaking staff which represent the other salaries were obtained from the Pay Research Bureau of the Public Service Staff Relations Board.

For further information, please contact Yves Dupuis, Education, Science and Culture Division, Statistics Canada, Ottawa, K1A 0T6 (613-995-9795).

Sources des prix

Les prix des articles autres que les traitements proviennent des séries de prix déjà publiées par Statistique Canada, particulièrement de l'Indice des prix à la consommation et de l'Indice des prix de ventes de l'industrie.

Les sous-indices des traitements des enseignants sont construits à partir des échelles salariales dans le temps. Aux fins du calcul de ce sous-indice, la répartition des enseignants selon l'expérience et la scolarité est maintenue constante (année de base) afin que le nombre d'enseignants et la variation expérience-scolarité n'influencent pas le mouvement des prix d'une année à l'autre.

Le bureau de recherche sur le traitement des salaires de la Commission des relations de travail dans la Fonction publique nous ont fourni les prix concernant la catégorie "autres salaires". Cette dernière catégorie est représentée par les concierges.

Pour plus de détails, veuillez communiquer avec M. Yves Dupuis, Division de l'éducation, des sciences et de la culture, Statistique Canada, Ottawa, K1A 0T6 (613-995-9795).

Education Price Index at the elementary-secondary level (EPI) by Province and Consumer Price Index (CPI) for Canada - 1973 to 1978 (base year 1973)

Indice des prix de l'enseignement aux niveaux élémentaire et secondaire (IPE) par province et indice des prix à la consommation (IPC) pour le Canada, 1973 à 1978. (année de base = 1973)

Province	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
EPI - IPE						
Newfoundland - Terre-Neuve	100.0	107.4	129.2	155.6	169.7	185.1
Prince Edward Island - Île-du-Prince-Edouard	100.0	107.9	122.6	151.4	167.9	178.8
Nova Scotia - Nouvelle-Ecosse	100.0	109.7	123.1	151.2	163.3	169.8
New Brunswick - Nouveau-Brunswick	100.0	107.6	127.4	148.7	161.4	168.9
Quebec - Québec	100.0	113.7	131.1	147.6	159.5	174.7
Ontario	100.0	108.1	122.7	146.0	158.6	169.2
Manitoba	100.0	112.5	129.0	143.8	155.1	164.7
Saskatchewan	100.0	110.4	124.1	146.9	158.4	169.3
Alberta	100.0	109.3	128.6	142.9	152.9	166.0
British Columbia - Colombie-Britannique	100.0	111.6	129.1	144.7	155.1	164.3
Canada	100.0	110.4	126.7	146.4	158.3	170.1
CPI - IPC						
Canada	100.0	110.9	122.9	132.1	142.7	155.5

PRELIMINARY DATA

DONNÉES PROVISOIRES

Note: Sub-indices are also available. - Des sous-indices sont aussi disponibles.

Education Price Index at the Elementary - Secondary Level and its Sub-Indices by Province, 1973 to 1978

(base year - 1973)

Indice des prix de l'enseignement aux niveaux élémentaire et secondaire et ses sous-indices selon la province, 1973 à 1978

(année de base - 1973)

	1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
C A N A D A						
EDUCATION PRICE INDEX - INDICE DES PRIX DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT	100.0	110.4	126.7	146.4	158.3	170.1
- Salaries and Wages - Traitements et salaires	100.0	109.1	125.2	145.5	157.8	169.8
- teachers' salaries - traitements des enseignants	100.0	109.0	125.5	146.1	157.6	169.8
- caretakers' salaries - salaires des concierges	100.0	109.4	122.8	141.0	159.8	169.4
- Instructional Supplies - Matériels didactiques	100.0	133.0	153.0	160.3	160.7	170.5
- Fees and Contractual Services - Honoraires et services contractuels	100.0	104.0	120.1	146.1	157.0	166.3
- School Facilities, Supplies and Services - Installations, fournitures et services scolaires	100.0	116.0	131.7	148.0	166.1	181.7
CONSUMER PRICE INDEX - INDICE DES PRIX A LA CONSOMMATION	100.0	110.9	122.9	132.1	142.7	155.5

PRELIMINARY DATA

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Education Price Index and the Elements
its Sub-Indices by Province

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Indice des prix de l'enseignement aux
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Newfoundland - Terre-Neuve

EDUCATION PRICE INDEX - INDICE DES PRIX DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT

- Salaries and Wages - Traitements et salaires
  - teachers' salaries - traitements des enseignants
  - caretakers' salaries - salaires des concierges
- Instructional Supplies - Matériels didactiques
- Fees and Contractual Services - Honoraires et services contractuels
- School Facilities, Supplies and Services - Installations, fournitures et services scolaires

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Prince Edward Island - Île-du-Prince-Edouard

EDUCATION PRICE INDEX - INDICE DES PRIX DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT

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Symbols - Signes conventionnels

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entary - Secondary Level and
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1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
100.0	107.4	129.2	155.6	169.7	185.1
100.0	106.5	129.6	157.5	172.1	188.4
100.0	106.3	130.0	158.4	172.8	189.5
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..	..	..	..	..	..
100.0	103.6	118.9	144.3	154.7	163.8
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100.0	107.9	122.6	151.4	167.9	178.8
100.0	106.9	121.3	151.8	169.0	179.7
100.0	106.6	121.1	152.9	169.9	180.7
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100.0	102.9	117.1	141.8	151.3	160.2
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- Salaries and Wages - Traitements et salaires
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  - caretakers' salaries - salaires des concierges
- Instructional Supplies - Matériels didactiques
- Fees and Contractual Services - Honoraires et services contractuels
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New Brunswick - Nouveau-Brunswick

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100.0	108.9	121.7	152.3	163.7	169.0
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100.0	104.9	122.8	149.9	162.1	171.6
..	..	..	..	..	..
100.0	107.6	127.4	148.7	161.4	168.9
100.0	106.3	126.8	148.9	161.7	168.4
100.0	105.9	127.3	149.9	161.9	168.3
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Ontario

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100.0	113.4	130.7	146.4	159.0	175.3
100.0	113.8	131.5	147.0	158.9	175.9
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100.0	104.8	122.3	149.2	161.2	170.7
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100.0	108.1	122.7	146.0	158.6	169.2
100.0	106.1	120.3	145.1	158.3	168.9
100.0	105.7	120.0	145.7	158.1	168.8
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100.0	103.2	118.0	143.0	152.9	161.9
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Saskatchewan

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British Columbia - Colombie-Britannique

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  - caretakers' salaries - salaires des concierges
- Instructional Supplies - Matériels didactiques
- Fees and Contractual Services - Honoraires et services contractuels
- School Facilities, Supplies and Services - Installations, fournitures et services scolaires

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Symbols - Signes conventionnels

.. figures not available - nombres indisponibles.

lementary - Secondary Level and
ovince, 1973 to 1978

ar = 1973)

aux niveaux élémentaire et secondaire et
rovince, 1973 à 1978

base = 1973)

1973	1974	1975	1976	1977	1978
100.0	109.3	128.6	142.9	152.9	166.0
100.0	108.0	127.8	141.5	151.6	165.1
100.0	107.8	128.4	141.6	150.6	164.6
..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..
100.0	103.2	118.0	143.0	152.9	162.0
..	..	..	..	..	..
100.0	111.6	129.1	144.7	155.1	164.3
100.0	110.5	127.9	143.5	153.6	162.4
100.0	110.6	128.6	143.8	152.7	161.4
..	..	..	..	..	..
..	..	..	..	..	..
100.0	106.3	126.6	155.3	169.4	179.3
..	..	..	..	..	..

PRELIMINARY DATA

DONNÉES PROVISOIRES